

Introduction to roundabouts on US 41



A safer kind of intersection

Roundabouts are gaining popularity in the United States due to their proven track record of providing safer and more efficient traffic flow. These circular intersections have flared entryways marked by yield signs and a centerpiece that deflects traffic, causing drivers to slow down. You may have seen other types of circular intersections such as a traffic circle, but roundabouts are far more efficient. Although roundabouts may seem foreign at first, they are very simple to use and will greatly improve safety on US 41.

Roundabout advantages

Roundabout benefits

Nervous about roundabouts? Research shows people embrace roundabouts quite quickly. In a recent multi-location study, 22-44 percent of drivers were in favor of roundabouts before their construction compared with 48-67 percent soon afterward, and 57-87 percent after roundabouts were in place for one year or more. As you can see, it doesn't take long before people begin to appreciate the many benefits of roundabouts.

Slower and safer

Roundabouts offer a unique opportunity for landscaping that standard intersections do not. The center deflector is a perfect place for flowers, trees, or other aesthetic design features. But most importantly, the center deflector causes traffic to slow down. Slower speeds reduce the severity of crashes and allow drivers and pedestrians more time to react to each other, thus increasing safety. In fact, studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that roundabouts have:

- 90 percent fewer fatal crashes
- 76 percent less crashes with injury
- 30-40 percent reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 10 percent less bicycle crashes
- Fewer conflict points, meaning fewer opportunities for crashes

Navigating roundabouts

Driving in and out of a roundabout will become second nature to you very quickly. To make sure that everyone is on the same page, WisDOT will be holding commuter training for roundabouts in different communities along US 41 during the construction project.

Can't make a training session? Here are a few basic guidelines you should get to know before you begin using roundabouts.

Approach and entry

- When approaching the roundabout, follow the lane designation signs and choose the proper lane for multi-lane approach roadways. Slow down and yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- Look to the left. Traffic in the roundabout has the right of way.
- Approach the yield line and enter the roundabout when there is an adequate gap in the circulating traffic flow.
- If another car is waiting at the yield line ahead of you, do not stop in the crosswalk. Keep the crosswalk clear for pedestrians.
- Bicyclists are permitted to ride within the roundabout. Please share the road and do not pass a bicycle in the roundabout.

Exiting the roundabout

- Once you have entered the roundabout, proceed counter-clockwise to your exit. You now have the right of way.
- As you approach your exit, turn on your right turn signal.
- Exit the roundabout, yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Pedestrians

- Stay on the designated walkways at all times.
- Cross only at the designated crosswalks.
- Never cross to the central island.
- Watch for cars; you have the right of way, but your best protection is your own attention.
- Cross the crosswalk one lane at a time, using the splitter island as a refuge area before crossing the next lane.

Cyclists

- If you are comfortable riding in traffic, take the lane and circulate like you are a vehicle, making sure you yield to traffic in the circle when entering.
- Ride at the speed of the circular roadway to discourage cars from passing you.
- When you exit the roundabout, use your right hand signal.
- If you are unsure about using the roundabout, get off and walk your bike as a pedestrian at the designated crosswalks.